

# The Chef Agenda

## Foreword:

Since the discovery of fire, we were set upon a course of culinary delight for which we could never have known in the Eden in which we were placed. The Garden of Eden in all its splendor of creation gave us beauty beyond comparison. In all its magnificence and glorious splendor the appreciation we now enjoy could never be acknowledged without the temptation of disobedience. However, in our downfall we were allowed to learn and create a new bliss. Through the culinary arts mankind has grown out of civilizations of turbulence to elegance in our journey of perfection. Throughout these ages and times we have continued to appreciate the culinary wonders our predecessors could never have envisioned.

That foundation of creation, which fire brought together, allowed us to depart from the other species in the light of growth. From being herbivores or carnivores to omnivores with an appreciation of the new wonder of transforming our food from sustenance to joyous splendor. Given the gift of manna from Heaven we were able to create more than an acceptance of the blessings of food to sustain us. We were given the opportunity to extend that, which we were given to learn, to build, those delights we now enjoy to create, those delights we now enjoy. A philosopher once spoke that a baptism by fire is the only way to truly cleanse an unclean spirit. Acknowledging that the discovery of fire, as it was no accident, was the gateway to the gastronomical society we now enjoy. Mankind took this new delight without intention and begins a course for which we embark today.

As we journey through the age of chefs we begin with the discovery of fire because it defines the kitchen and thusly the chef. In its infancy culinary arts were really never envisioned as art. It was simply the act of using a discovery (Fire) to create a sustaining meal for which we could survive on. It transforms itself with the initialization of civilization. Upon mans entrance to a societal format we begin the aversion to the artistic flare of chefs. Although usually delegated to the woman of the house duties, as we became more influenced by our view of the society we came to expect more elaborate inventions of creativity. It became with the introduction of the class-based society that we wanted more and better tasting food creations. Our demand became fixated upon that which was more pleasing to our guest/compatriots therefore we placed more emphasis on the preparation of items that were more flavorful and more desirably yet less locatable.

With this new emphasis enters the artisans to assist the wives in creating splendid affairs for the husbands further etching the culinary field into history. As civilization grew so did the field of culinary delight as it could be perceived during the time period? It must be noted however that we are still at the infant stage at this point even as the artistic influence became present. Our awareness of the complete culinary competence would not be discovered until the advancement of civilization several centuries later.

Before we advance that far however let's examine the age as it was. While our gastronomical assurgency was evident, our capabilities of extended preparation were

limited. Digressing for a moment into the story of the Israelites lost in the wilderness. Remembering that when given the gift of manna from Heaven to quench their hunger they were instructed to discard it daily. Those who did not obey this directive found maggots and infestations in their saved provisions. This occurrence happened daily until they were given the authority to gather and save their portions on the sixth day for the meals of the seventh day. For as their commandment was the seventh day was a day of rest for which no provisions were to be gathered.

It is from this lesson we may derive that the conditions were made right on the sixth day for the provisions to be held over during the night and day. In that scientific perspective we can find the basis or foundation for the next age of culinarians. Although it is written that ancient civilizations (Cavedwellers) would store their meat and other food products in caves most specifically during the winter months. Our latter history acknowledges that while we were aware of these abilities, the availability during the spring and summer periods of ice caused culinarians of the day to smoke and salt their foods for preservation. However the 18<sup>th</sup> century brings us the modern chef as we can now define. In dispensing the traditions of past culinary artisans we arrive at the age of modernization civilization has begun to advance at a phenomenal rate. As the industrial revolution becomes entrained so does the era of the modern chef truly establish itself. With the realization of refrigeration the culinary industry explodes into its most artistic stage. It was now advantageous for the chef/ culinarian to produce the most elaborate creations one can imagine.

Such is the era of the accredited founding chefs Marie Antoine Careme and Georges-Auguste Escoffier. Careme the patisserie perhaps the lesser known among most chefs is the artisan behind the creations we prepare. Without his architectural prowess the modern chef would not be trained in the proficiency of artistic delight as a foundation of his/her certification. In his writings (L'art de la cuisine francaiseau xix siecle) *The Art of French Cuisine in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century* we are instructed in the art of presentation as well as the arts of food preparation...Thusly, advancing the culinarian from the housewife/homemaker into the professional artisan. In his successor Escoffier we are further enlightened in the technologies of French cuisine and culinary arts. Through his mastery of Careme's techniques we are now progressing into the artisans of today's cuisine. In Escoffier the foundation becomes designed for the expedience of the culinary operation as much for the elegance of the artistry. Escoffier believes that more elaborate creations can be achieved from spending less time on the pageantry of the kitchen operation and more time on the creation of great cuisine. His mastery of Careme's techniques offers us the hierarchy we now enjoy in our daily operations.

Accepting this information now provides us with the foundation of the new age chef. With the architects of modern cuisine long past we have allowed the introduction of an entirely new cuisine. The art of fusion has become the most accepted food preparation technique in the new chef's repertoire. With this knowledge comes the foundation of the modernized chef/manager. The new age chef has progressed into not only the owner/centerpiece of his/her establishment but the financial benefactor in most occasions

of cuisine development. As our founding chefs created cuisine beyond their times the new modern chef has the creative capacity to influence cuisine's from past and present ingredients to enhance the culinary artistry farther than it could be imagined.

With this expectation the new age chef will acknowledge the perseverance of the founding masters and enhance culinary techniques for ages to come...Accepting the challenge of creating new techniques of food preparation as well as refining old techniques adapting them for the modern chef and apprentice; Taking the historical aspects of culinary arts, acknowledging them, and redefining the modern perspective to influence the chef and non-chef. For, the greatest traditions are founded through haute cuisine and history is not presented without the culinarian past present and future. It is by these definitions that the new age chef will present him/herself for the honor and designation of cuisine management. As we enter this new time of creation all chefs/culinarians must be aware of the stand we face. **OUR GOAL IS TO ACHIEVE THE GREATEST OF CULINARY ARTISTRY BEFORE THE CULINARY HISTORY PASSES THE TRADITION.**

Created on 1/20/2001